

THE ROLE OF SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS IN THE READING PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 1 PUPILS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of socioeconomic factors on the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils, focusing on individual, family, and school influences on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The study also explored challenges faced by parents and teachers in supporting reading development. The findings revealed that socioeconomic factors such as family income, parents' educational level, and occupation played significant roles in shaping reading outcomes. Pupils with higher motivation, strong reading strategies, and active parental involvement demonstrated better reading performance. Family stability and the time parents dedicated to reading with their children were critical for enhancing phonemic awareness and comprehension. School factors, including the availability of reading materials and effective teacher instruction, also positively influenced pupils' reading abilities. The study found significant correlations between family income, parental education, and pupils' reading fluency and comprehension. Furthermore, challenges faced by parents with lower educational backgrounds and teachers managing diverse classroom needs highlighted the importance of collaboration in overcoming barriers to reading success. The results emphasize the interconnectedness of socioeconomic factors in supporting early reading development and suggest that a supportive home environment and effective school practices are essential for improving reading outcomes.

Keyword: - Socioeconomic factors, Reading Performance, and Grade one pupils.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a crucial language skill taught in primary school to help pupils understand the meaning of reading content. It makes learning easier and helps them comprehend various types of written information. Reading is an essential skill that includes content and reading comprehension. A person who can read and write well can comprehend various types of information, making it essential for them to acquire knowledge (Saonah, 2018; Pratiwi, 2020).

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2021 reveals that South African pupils' reading performance is significantly lower than other countries, with factors such as economically disadvantaged backgrounds, resource shortages in schools, teacher absenteeism, curriculum failure, and lack of formal qualifications contributing to poor performance. Factors such as low education levels, lack of parental involvement, and parental involvement in their children's education also contribute to poor reading performance (Spaull, 2017; Willenberg 2018).

While in the Philippines, Aguila, Ramos, and Del Barrio (2019) investigated the factors influencing the reading ability of Grade 3 pupils in Agus-os Elementary School in Indang, Cavite. They discovered that the primary causes of difficulty were parents' lack of monitoring and reading with partners. Pupils enjoyed short tales and large

letters but struggled with letter and word recognition. It was discovered that practice, regular reading, and reading drills improved comprehension.

Based on the study of Liu, Chen and Liu (2022), students' reading performance is influenced by a variety of factors, including learning strategies, motivation, family support, school instruction, etc. These factors can be divided basically into three levels: individual level, family level, and school level.

Teshome (2014) emphasizes the significance of reading performance in academic achievement, as it sets the foundation for future learning and success in most subjects. Many students struggle with reading in their first years, and identifying factors affecting their performance is crucial for academic success. This helps teachers identify barriers and make informed decisions about teaching methods and strategies to overcome these barriers, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes.

Over the last few decades, a growing amount of reading research has focused on a number of elements impacting reading ability, such as contextual variations, cognitive abilities, brain and genetic factors. However, few research have been undertaken on socioeconomic factors influencing students' reading performance (Peng et al., 2018; Nikla & Schneider, 2013). Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the factors affecting reading performance of Grade 1 pupils in selected school of Magpet East District.

2. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design was employed. The descriptive approach focuses on describing characteristics like the level of reading performance and the impact of socioeconomic status, while the correlational method explores relationships between these variables. The study was conducted in selected elementary schools in Magpet, Makilala, and President Roxas within the Cotabato Division during the 2023-2024 school year. The study involved Grade 1 teachers and pupils from the selected elementary schools in the Cotabato Division. Complete enumeration was used, meaning all Grade 1 teachers in the selected schools were included in the study. A self-made survey questionnaire was used, validated for reliability with the Cronbach Alpha test. It consisted of three parts: (1) socioeconomic profile, (2) learning factors affecting reading performance, and (3) pupils' reading performance (phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). The researcher sought approval from relevant authorities, then conducted a brief orientation before administering the surveys. Health and safety protocols were followed. After collecting the surveys, the data was encoded, collated, and tabulated. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored the impact of socioeconomic factors on the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils, examining individual, family, and school factors, and how these influenced key aspects of reading performance such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The study also aimed to identify challenges faced by parents and teachers in supporting the reading abilities of pupils. The results presented here reflect the relationship between these factors and reading outcomes, highlighting key findings in the areas of socioeconomic profile, individual, family, and school factors.

Socioeconomic Profile of Respondents

The socioeconomic profile of the respondents revealed several trends. The majority of respondents earned between 16,000 and 20,000 pesos per month, indicating a middle-income bracket for most families. In terms of education, most parents had completed only high school, which may influence the support they can provide their children in terms of academic development. The typical family size ranged from 4 to 5 members, with the majority of respondents being full-time employees. These findings suggest that family structure and income may be influential factors in the educational outcomes of pupils, as families with stable income and fewer members may have more resources to allocate towards their children's education.

Research supports the idea that family income and parental education level are significant factors influencing a child's academic performance. Higher family income often correlates with better academic outcomes due to increased access to resources such as books, tutoring, and extracurricular activities (Mistry, Benner, Tan, & Wu, 2014). Conversely, families with lower incomes may struggle to provide such resources, which could hinder their children's educational success (Jeynes, 2002). Studies also show that parents with higher educational attainment are better able to support their children academically, providing more structured learning environments (Crosnoe, 2007). However, the relationship between family structure and educational outcomes is less clear, as some

studies suggest that children from larger families may benefit from stronger social support networks, even if resources are limited (Glick & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007).

Influence of Individual Factors on Reading Performance

Regarding individual factors, the study found that Grade 1 pupils' reading performance was positively influenced by innate factors such as a love for reading and background knowledge. Pupils who had a strong interest in reading often utilized various reading strategies, such as rereading, predicting, and summarizing, which enhanced their ability to comprehend texts. Additionally, these pupils were highly motivated to read, often setting specific goals and striving to achieve good grades, which reinforced their reading habits. This suggests that motivation and the personal interest of pupils in reading are critical components in developing strong reading skills at an early age.

Individual factors such as motivation, reading strategies, and intrinsic interest in reading play a significant role in early literacy development. Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, has been shown to directly influence reading performance, with motivated readers demonstrating stronger comprehension and fluency (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Furthermore, the use of effective reading strategies, such as rereading and summarizing, has been linked to improved reading comprehension (Pressley, 2006). A love for reading and background knowledge also serve as key predictors of reading success, as children with these attributes are more likely to engage with texts, leading to enhanced reading skills (Baker & Wigfield, 1999).

Impact of Family Factors

Family factors also played a significant role in the reading performance of pupils. The study revealed that a stable socioeconomic status, coupled with active parental involvement, positively affected pupils' reading abilities. Parents who had the time and resources to read with their children, provide feedback on their reading miscues, and dedicate time to practice significantly enhanced their children's phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The active participation of parents in their child's educational development, even at home, has a measurable impact on the child's academic success, reinforcing the importance of a supportive home environment.

Family involvement has consistently been found to enhance children's reading performance. Studies show that children whose parents actively engage in their learning, such as reading with them or providing consistent academic support, exhibit higher levels of literacy (Evans, 2004). A stable socioeconomic status allows parents to invest time and resources into their children's education, thereby improving their reading abilities (Morrison, Trotman, & Bynum, 2016). The involvement of parents in a child's education, especially at home, provides important benefits such as increased phonemic awareness, better vocabulary acquisition, and improved comprehension skills (Domina, 2005).

School Factors and Teacher Influence

School factors were also found to influence reading performance, particularly in terms of the availability of adequate reading materials and positive pupil-teacher relationships. Schools that provided a rich array of reading materials and fostered a supportive environment where teachers and pupils had a good rapport saw better reading outcomes. Teachers played a pivotal role by providing explicit and systematic instruction on reading skills, conducting weekly group reading sessions, and employing motivational strategies to engage pupils. These teaching practices were found to have a direct impact on pupils' phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension, suggesting that effective teacher instruction and a well-resourced learning environment are key contributors to early reading success.

The role of teachers and school environments in shaping reading outcomes has been well-documented. A positive school climate, characterized by supportive teacher-student relationships, is associated with improved reading performance (Pianta et al., 2008). Furthermore, schools that offer a variety of reading materials and implement structured, systematic reading instruction tend to see higher literacy outcomes (Torgesen et al., 2006). Effective teacher instruction, including the use of motivational teaching strategies and individualized support, significantly contributes to the development of phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension (Guskey, 2007).

Reading Performance of Pupils

The study also assessed the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils in terms of phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Overall, pupils performed very well in these areas, demonstrating strong

foundational reading skills at this early stage of education. The results indicated that reading motivation, reading strategies, and parental involvement are key contributors to high reading performance among Grade 1 pupils.

The strong reading performance demonstrated by Grade 1 pupils in this study is consistent with findings from other research that emphasizes the importance of early literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, in determining later academic success. Research has shown that foundational skills in reading, established in the early years, are predictive of future academic achievement (Snow, 2010). High levels of reading motivation and frequent practice are linked to higher performance in these areas (Guthrie et al., 2004).

Significant Relationships and Influences on Reading Performance

The study analyzed the combined influence of socioeconomic factors on reading performance. It found that innate factors and reading strategies were significant predictors of phonemic awareness. Parental education level significantly influenced phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension, while school climate and teacher instruction were crucial for developing phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. Furthermore, family income was found to correlate with reading fluency, parents' level of education correlated with phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and fluency, and occupation correlated with reading fluency. These results underscore the interconnectedness of socioeconomic factors and their collective influence on the reading development of young pupils.

The significant influence of socioeconomic factors on reading performance found in this study aligns with extensive research on the topic. Studies indicate that parental education, family income, and occupation significantly impact children's literacy development, with higher levels of parental education being linked to better reading outcomes (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Additionally, socioeconomic factors, including access to educational resources, directly affect reading fluency and comprehension (Sirin, 2005).

Challenges Faced by Parents and Teachers

The study also identified challenges faced by parents and teachers regarding the reading abilities of pupils. Parents, especially those with lower educational backgrounds, may struggle to provide adequate support for their children's reading development, particularly in helping them with homework or reinforcing reading skills at home. Teachers, on the other hand, face the challenge of addressing diverse learning needs within the classroom, especially when resources are limited. Despite these challenges, active involvement from both parents and teachers was shown to be crucial in mitigating these difficulties and enhancing pupils' reading performance.

The challenges identified in this study, including the struggle of parents with lower educational backgrounds to support their children's reading development, have been observed in other research. Parents with lower education levels often lack the skills and confidence to assist their children with academic tasks, which can hinder reading development (Hernandez, 2011). Similarly, teachers face challenges in addressing diverse learning needs within the classroom, particularly when there are resource constraints (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrated that socioeconomic factors, including family income, parents' educational level, and school environment, significantly impact the reading performance of Grade 1 pupils. Individual factors, such as innate interest in reading and motivation, also play a crucial role in enhancing reading abilities. The findings suggest that interventions targeting family support, teacher training, and improved school resources could further boost the reading performance of early learners, particularly in areas of phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The study highlights the importance of a holistic approach in supporting reading development, involving not just the child but also their family and school environment.

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